**Introduction of WLL facility**

3810. SHRI K. M. KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to introduce Wireless Local Loop (WLL) technology for providing telephone connections in rural and semi-urban areas;

(b) whether it is also a fact that industrial lobby in basic cellular services is opposing WLL technology; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) objected to this on the plea that the said decision is detrimental to their interests and moved Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT), which has dismissed the COAI's Petition.

**Licences for long distance service**

3811. SHRI K. M. KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the companies which have been issued licences for providing long distance service;

(b) the number of companies which have been registered as infrastructure provider-I and II;

(c) whether PSU like MTNL and BSNL can withstand the

competition due to sudden opening of national long distance service to Private Parties; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Apart from Bharat Sanchar Nigam limited (BSNL) who is licensed to provide National Long Distance Service and Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) who is providing International Long Distance Service, the names of various other international and national long distance licensees are enclosed as Statement. (*See* below)

(b) The total number of licensees for Infrastructure Providers (category-II) is 05 (five) whereas total number of companies registered as Infrastrcture Providers (category-I) is 52 (fifty two).

(c) and (d) The decision to open National Long Distance service to private sector was not sudden but a well deliberated decision taken after due consultation. MTNL and BSNL were, thus, given enough time to poise for competition which are sure to grow with much faster pace due to competitive spirit.

*Statement*

*The names of the International and National Long Distance Licensees*

| S. No. | Services | Name of the Licensees |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | National Long Distance Services | M/s. Bharti Telesonic Limited<br>M/s. Reliance Communication Limited<br>M/s. Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd. |
| 2. | International Long Distance Service | M/s. Reliance Communications Limited<br>M/s. Bharti Telesonic Limited<br>M/s. Data Access (India) Ltd. |
| 3. | Infrastructure Providers (Category-II) | Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL)<br>M/s. Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd.<br>M/s. Hughes Escorts Communications Limited<br>M/s. The Tata Power Company Limited<br>M/s. Rail Tel Corporation of India Limited. |